

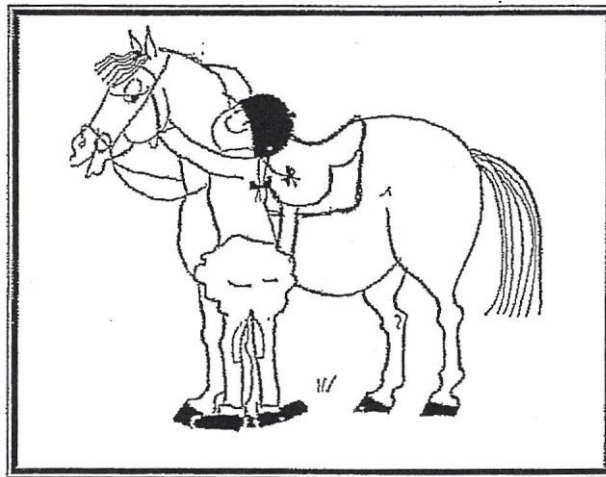


# INTRODUCTORY TRAINING SESSION

## Safety around horses

- ❖ Make sure you wear closed toed shoes and dress appropriately (no dangly ear rings, short shorts, or flappy clothes)
- ❖ Be aware of the horses eyes, ears, nostrils, posture and level attention to their environment
- ❖ If walking behind the horses, speak and stay close to the horses hindquarters, so as not to startle them
- ❖ Be aware of the horses blind spots (directly in front of them) and vision
- ❖ Refrain from making sudden movements and loud noises
- ❖ Be in charge of the horse, it gives them confidence in you as their leader
- ❖ Ask for help if you are not sure of something or feel uncomfortable with any situation (we are here to help you)

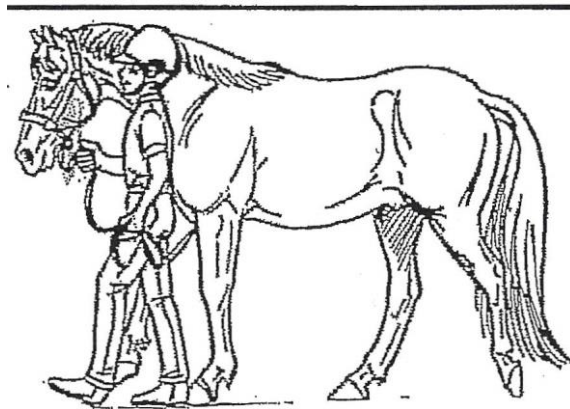
## The Working Horse Policy



- Just as Seeing Eye dogs are considered “working” animals, the same is true for horses at HHK. From the moment a horse is removed from the stall, until it is returned after their lesson, that horse is considered to be “working” this includes during the grooming and tacking.
- In order to maintain good ground manners with our horses, we must insist that volunteers do not hug, rub the horse’s faces, play with their noses or partake in any other assertive forms of affection, while they are “working”.
- A pat on the neck and a word of encouragement is good, however, assertive affection is inappropriate until our horses are finished with their jobs and returned to their stalls. This is to be fair to our horses and not confuse them.

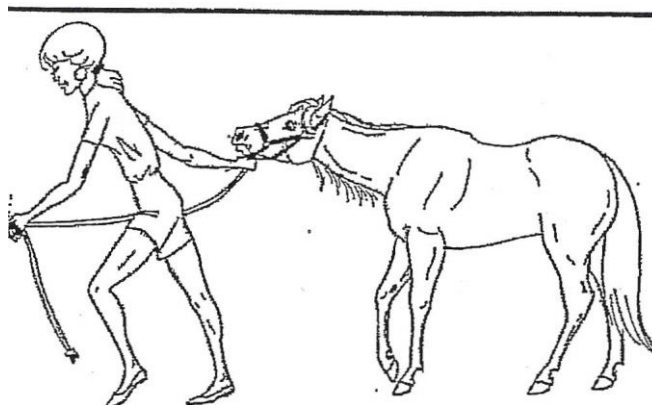
## General Leading Volunteer Handout

- A Leader's first responsibility is the horse, but a Leader must also be constantly aware of the rider's needs, the Instructor's directions and any potential hazards in or around the arena.
- A leader must consider the placement of the Side walkers to make sure there is enough room along the rail and around obstacles for them to pass safely.
- A leader must not execute an instruction for the rider before he/she has had time to process the information and make an effort to comply – think 3-5 seconds.



Leading in a safe and correct manner.

- Position yourself between the ear and the shoulder area of the horse
- The horse must walk at the pace directed by the Leader
- The horse should not lag behind the movement or pull ahead of the leader



Leading in an unsafe and ineffective manner.

## **The Role of the Leader**

### **What is the role of the Leader?**

The role of the Leader is to lead the horse while allowing the rider to make every attempt to control their horse whenever possible. The Leader does not speak to the rider or to the Side walkers and takes their direction from the Instructor.

**Why?** The riders should be listening to the directions of the Instructor. For this reason, we ask volunteers not to speak unnecessarily to each other or to the riders during the lesson.

### **What is the “Working Horse Policy”?**

Like seeing-eye dogs, we consider our horses to be working from the moment they leave their stalls until they are returned to their stalls after they have completed their lesson(s). This work time includes when the horses are at the hitching posts, warming up or waiting for a class to begin. Playing with the horse’s faces or snuggling is considered inappropriate during these times.

**Why?** Invading the horses’ “face space” encourages rubbing on people and can promote nipping and other bad behaviors. With so many different volunteers working with the horses, maintaining consistency with their handling is important.

### **What is horse body language?**

Horses use their bodies to communicate with each other. They use their ears, tails, legs and sometimes their entire bodies to get their point across. They use this body language with us as well so it’s important to understand what they are trying to tell us.

**Why?** Understanding horse body language is essential for safety reasons. An angry or annoyed horse could be giving very clear signals and if ignored someone could get injured. A horse tells you just what its feeling with the position of its ears and the actions of its tail.

### **What is the correct body position for leading a horse?**

The correct body position for the Leader is the area between the horses throat lash and shoulder.

**Why?** It is our responsibility to be a partner with the horse, walking along in a relaxed manner beside the horse’s neck with our shoulders square allows the horse to do his job as he has been taught.

### **What does the Leaders body language have to do with leading?**

Leaders communicate with the horse by using their body language resulting in effective Leading.

**Why?** Horses are herd animals and want a leader. The body language of a Leader tells the horse that the Leader is in charge of the situation. This requires the Leader's head to be up, looking where they are going with a sense of leadership.

### **What is the proper way to hold the lead rope?**

The lead rope is held in the right hand between 4 -12" from the halter snap. There should be no tension in the lead rope so the horse's head moves freely. The Leader's right hand holds the remaining part of the lead rope, being careful not to coil the lead rope around your hand.

**Why?** Holding the lead rope in this way provides better control of the horse. A horse needs the freedom to move its head in order to maintain its balance. Having space from the halter snap, without tension in the lead rope, allows the horses head to move freely. Leaders that hang or continuously or pull on the lead rope causes tension in the lead rope. This tension is transferred to the horse. Coiling a lead rope around the hand is dangerous and if a horse pulls back a serious injury could occur. Also, if the lead rope hangs below the knees, it presents a tripping hazard.

### **What is the horse's "rectangle"?**

Picture an imaginary rectangle around the entire body of your horse. All communication from the Leader to the horse happens in this rectangle. The horse must always stay in its rectangle when working.

**Why?** The horse looks for direction and confirmation from its Leader. The horse cannot be expected to know how to respond if it is not given accurate information through the body language and the voice commands of the Leader. If kept properly in its rectangle, the horse will wait for instruction because it feels confident and secure with its Leader.

### **What if the horse ventures out of the rectangle?**

If the horse comes out of its rectangle, gently return the horse back into the rectangle. Be firm and repeat the action as many times as needed.

**Why?** If the horse repeatedly comes out of the rectangle it may not believe your body language. Check yourself to make sure you are not giving the wrong information to the horse with your body language. If this doesn't help, half-halts can be applied to better maintain the horse in its rectangle.

### **What is a half-halt?**

The half-halt is a communication method used in riding as well as in ground schooling. The Leader will use the half-halt manner e.g., squeeze/release, squeeze/release. This is repeated until the horse responds, backs off or moves due to the pressure. For the half-halt to be effective, the Leader must use correct body language and be looking forward where there are going with their "heart up" and shoulders straight. Examples of situations that may require a half-halt are: **1)** to prepare for an up or down transition; **2)** to maintain a desired gait/speed; **3)** a correction for inappropriate behavior; **4)** a gentle reminder to pay attention.

**Why?** The half-halt is an effective tool for the Leader in order to better control the horse. Leaders must remember the half-halt is NOT a tug of war, but a pressure and release technique that requires practice.

### **What is the correct halt position for the Leader?**

The correct position for the Leader **at the halt** is either on the left side of the horse in a body position, parallel to the horse at a standstill or turned in front facing the horse at a standstill.

**Why?** It is the leader's choice to stand in front of the horse or to the side of the horse depending on the horse's response. It is the leader's responsibility to ensure that the horse's stands still when in the "halted position".

### **What voice commands do we give the horse?**

The following are the main voice commands that are used which the horses understand: "**And Walk-On**", "**And T-rot**" and "**And Whoa**".

**Why?** Using the correct voice commands maintains consistency for the horses. Using the word **and** in front of the voice command prepares the horse for the command.

### **What is safe horse spacing?**

Safe horse spacing is the distance between horses maintained by the Leader throughout the entire lesson. Safe spacing is approximately 2-3 horse lengths from the horse in front or behind you. When lining up or walking side by side, horses should be no closer than 1 horse length apart.

**Why?** Horses can get fussy when put too close together and could kick out which is very dangerous to the Side walkers. Also keeping a safe horse distance allows riders to be able to make circles or change direction without bumping into each other or making turns that are too tight which will unbalance the horse and the rider.

### **What is the correct way to take a horse around a turn?**

In order to correctly take a horse through a turn the Leader must keep the horse on its intended track while *maintaining the horse's speed*. In order to keep the horse on its track *turn your shoulders like bicycle handle bars* while going through the turn. Extend your arm in order to keep the horse in its track. Use your body language and half-halts as needed so you will be able to keep the horse moving at the speed you've dictated through the turn. Refrain from pulling a horse through a turn. It is the job of the Leader to keep the horse at the dictated pace throughout the entire lesson.

**Why?** Leaders must use their body language, voice commands and half-halts in order to keep the horse moving. Pulling a horse through a turn will only hollow out the horse's back and disrupt the therapeutic movement of the horse. A Leader must realize that a horse *should not be turned abruptly*. Always allow the horse to take at least 3-4 steps forward before attempting to make a turn.

### **What communication should I have with the Rider or Side walkers?**

Leaders should not participate in any unnecessary talking with the rider or other volunteers unless there is a situation or an emergency. Leaders are responsible for the horse only and are not to chat with the rider or the Side walkers.

**Why?** Each person in the arena has a specific job and must be allowed to focus entirely on that job. Unnecessary talking will confuse the rider and disrupt the Instructor's lesson.

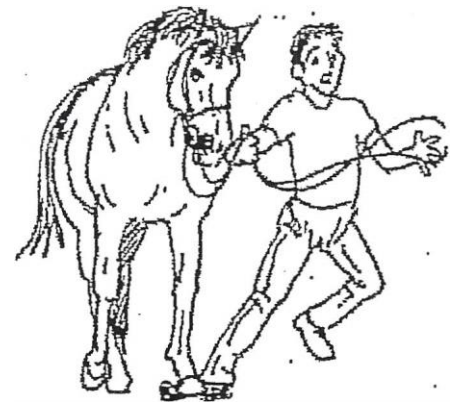
## *Turning Your Horse*

- Extend your arm to keep the horses on track
- Look and walk with intension in the direction you plan to go
- When turning, Push the horse away from you as opposed to pulling the horse towards you to prevent being stepped on accidentally



THE RIGHT WAY

Push him away from you when turning.



THE WRONG WAY

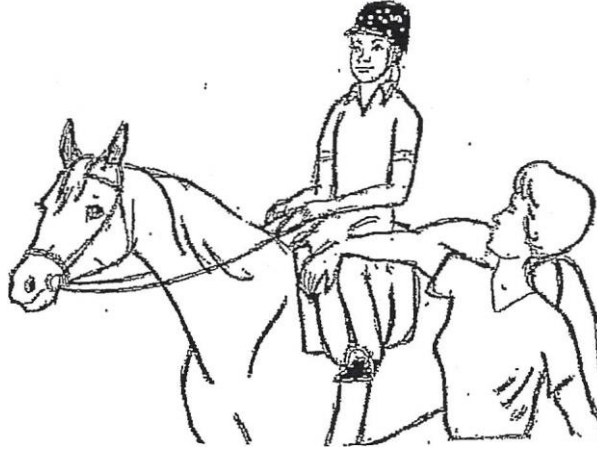
Don't pull the horse toward your feet.



## Side Walking Handout

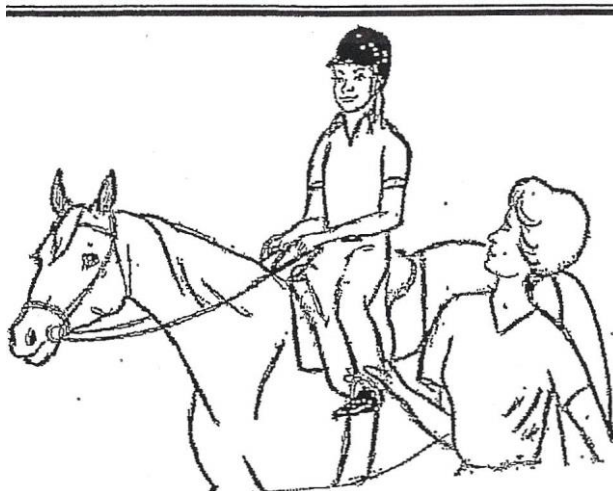
Side walkers are responsible for the safety of the rider.

responsible for the



Side walker using the over-the-thigh hold

- **Be careful not to lean into the horse or into the riders leg**
- **Stay connected to the horse (No hands in pockets)**
- **Allow the riders 2-5 seconds to process the Instructor directions**
- **If there is no response, give a tactile, visual or verbal cue.**
- **Stay by the riders knee and away from the horse's flank**
- **Avoid unnecessary talking to the riders or other volunteers**



Sidewalker using the ankle hold.

## SIDEWALKING

### What is the role of the Side walker?

Side walkers are directly responsible for the safety of the rider, not with the horse. Some riders will require one Side walker while others may require two. A more independent rider may not have a Side walker at all. Some Side walkers may need to use a thigh hold for the entire lesson while others might only need to stay within an arm's reach of their rider. Side walkers must be *vigilant not to let their minds wander* and to *keep their hands out of their pockets* so they are ready for action at a moment's notice. A Side walker *must never leave the rider at any time*. If fatigue requires you to stop, ask the Leader to bring the horse to a halt in the center of the arena so you may stop and change the side of the horse you are working on.

**Why?** In order for a Side walker to give their full attention to the rider they must not be concerned with the horse. Side walkers must remain focused on the rider and the lesson at hand. *Side walkers are considered an extension of the Instructor and have the ability to enhance the experience for the rider.* Side walkers must be vigilant to the safety of the rider and stay "connected" to the horse in some way. Being connected will make the Side walker better able to keep in rhythm with the horse and more able to stay with the rider in case something unexpected does occur.

### What does staying "connected" mean?

Staying connected means the Side walker is either using a type of hold on the rider or holding onto part of the tack e.g., the saddle pad, a stirrup leather or perhaps a saddle flap.

**Why?** Staying connected keeps the Side walker more closely in rhythm with the horse and better prepared to stay with the horse if there should be a jump forward or other sudden movement.

### What if something is wrong with the tack?

If the tack needs to be adjusted (the saddle, girth or stirrups), as a team come into the center of the arena and ask the Instructor for assistance.

**Why?** It is the responsibility of the Instructor to make the necessary safety adjustments to the tack for the rider. Instructors will determine if the girth is tight enough for the horse or if the stirrups are the correct length for the rider.

### What position is best for the Side walker?

The best position for the Side walker is at the rider's knee. Side walkers must be careful not to drift near the flank area of the horse.

**Why?** Staying at the rider's knee puts the Side walker in the best position to give any needed cueing or assist with the riders balance. Walking or drifting into the flank area of the horse may cause the horse to become irritated.

### **What are the holds used by the Side walker?**

**Ankle Hold:** Without gripping tightly hold onto the ankle of the rider. This hold helps to keep the leg in a certain position and helps to improve pelvic position.

**Cuff Hold:** Holding onto the pant cuff of the rider rather than the ankle.

**Over-the-Thigh-Hold:** Extending the arm over the rider's thigh with hand gripping the front of the saddle or the surcingle. This hold may also be used in conjunction with an ankle hold. Move in rhythm with the horse so you are not pulled along as the horse moves. Be careful not to put any pressure on the riders' leg or into the back or side of the horse.

**Why?** Side walkers are asked to assist the riders using different holds depending on the needs of the rider. These holds help the rider maintain proper body alignment and achieve balance. The Side walkers should never have to support the weight of the rider or hang onto the rider in any way.

### **What is the correct body alignment for the rider?**

A neutral pelvic position should be established first. Riders should be centered on the horse with an imaginary straight line running from their shoulder to their hip to ankle. The foot in the stirrup should be placed on the ball of the riders' foot with the safety feature on the outside of the riders' foot.

**Why?** All our riders need to strive for the correct riding position. Although not all riders will be able to achieve this position, it doesn't mean they shouldn't try. The riders' position affects their balance, posture and ability to move in harmony with the horse. The better the riders' body alignment the better therapeutic benefit for the rider. Stirrups designed with safety features allow the rider's feet to come out of the stirrups easily in case of a fall.

### **What if I become tired?**

If you become tired ask the Leader to bring the horse into the center of the arena and come to a halt. Side walkers must change places one person at a time. Do not both let go of the rider at the same time. Make sure one person securely has the rider at all times. If you are the only Side walker ask the Instructor for assistance.

**Why?** Leaving the rider unattended puts the rider at risk. If you must take a break or change arm position ask the Leader to move your team off the track and into the middle of the arena, out of the way of the other riders.

### **What should I say to the rider?**

Side walkers must avoid all unnecessary talking to the rider during the lesson. Only one Side walker should speak to avoid confusion and/or processing problems for the rider. The second Side walker should remain quiet. Always give the rider at least 3-5 seconds to process and respond to the Instructor's directions before giving the rider a "cue". If the rider is not paying attention, redirect the rider to the Instructor's directions.

**Why?** Many of the riders have difficulty processing information so excessive talking makes things more confusing for them. Side walkers should always be listening for Instructor's directions & paying close attention to the rider's needs while staying focused on the lesson at hand.

### **What must I do to "cue" the rider?**

Occasionally Side walkers may need to assist the rider with a "cue". Usually the Instructor will tell the Side walker when & how to cue a rider. Tapping the hand or the leg of the rider to remind them which one to use or perhaps gently moving the arm or hand of the rider in the direction it needs to go are appropriate ways of "cuing" a rider.

**Why?** Riders need to be treated with the dignity and respect and allowed the opportunity to accomplish as much on their own as possible so cueing should be minimal.

### **What if the rider won't listen and/or is misbehaving?**

If the rider is showing signs of bad behavior or wanting to get off the horse, let the Instructor know immediately. Do not allow the rider to get off the horse. Maintain the rider's position on the horse until the Instructor can assist you further. If the rider is misbehaving in word or deed, firmly use the word "NO" and ask the rider not to repeat the inappropriate action. Let the Instructor know immediately if the behavior continues.

**Why?** You have the right to let the rider know when they are behaving inappropriately. Pulling your hair, hitting or kicking you and/or the horse or using bad language is examples of inappropriate and unacceptable behavior.

# **EMERGENCY INFORMATION**

## **Emergency Procedure in the Arena**

- The instructor will give the command to halt all horses in a lesson.
- Volunteers and students will respond immediately and halt.
- Horse Leaders are responsible for the horse; they will stand in the halt position at horse's head.
- Side walkers are responsible for the rider; they will stand beside riders ready for an emergency dismount.
- If the situation warrants an emergency dismount, the instructors will give the command "Emergency Dismount."
- Volunteers are not to leave their assigned rider and/or horse for any reason except under the instructor's direction.
- All volunteers are to pay close attention to the Instructor's directions.
- Return to normal riding activities when the instructor gives the directive.

## **In Case of a Fallen Rider**

If a rider has fallen, the Instructor will ask the volunteers to halt and pay attention to their horse, if they are the leader and their rider, if they are a side walker. Everyone remain calm and positive.

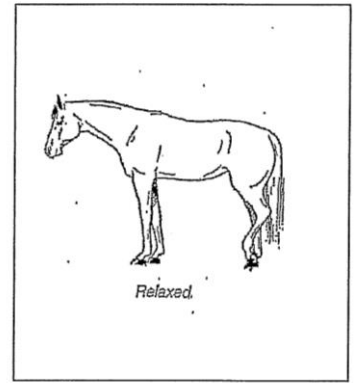
The Leader of the horse of which the rider has fallen, must keep the horse under control, still and safely away from the rider. The side walker stays with the rider and waits for the Instructor to get to the rider. The Instructor will inspect the rider for any injury and take actions accordingly.

If a horse gets loose in the arena for any reason, everyone in the arena must halt and remain still until the horse is caught. Only a staff member or an assigned volunteer should go after the horse. Leaders are in charge of the horses they are leading and encourage the horses to be calm and still.

## **Evacuation Policy**

- All volunteers "√" each class you are volunteering in and initial out when leaving.
- Riders/instructor will check in at the daily roster posted in the tack room.
- If an evacuation emergency situation were to arise, such as unexpected torrential rain or tsunami, the Instructor declares an emergency, dismounts of all the riders and has everyone congregate at the parking lot for a head count.
- The Instructor would call 911. While an assigned staff person or volunteer makes sure everyone is accounted from the daily roster and volunteer attendance book.
- The Instructor will direct everyone to follow the advice of 911 to evacuate the facility safely.

# Horse Body Language



## Ears

- When the horse's ears are laid flat back, it is usually quite angry and a bite or a kick may soon follow. Always pay close attention to the position of the ears!
- When the ears are pricked forward, the horse is curious or alert.
- When a horse flicks its ears around when being ridden he is usually very attentive to his rider's wishes.

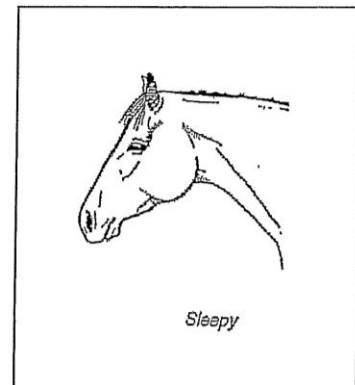
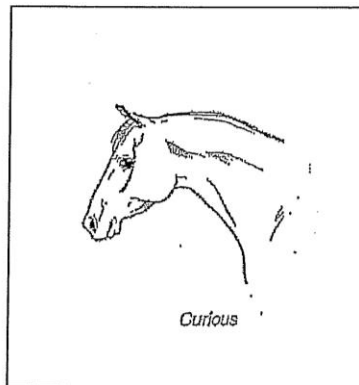
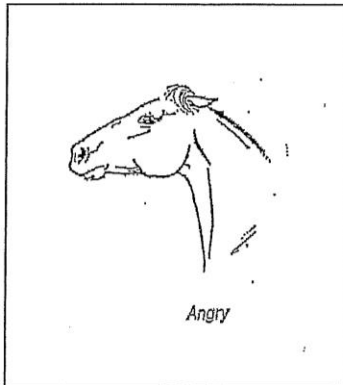
## Eyes

- In a curious or alarmed state the horse's eyes will widen.
- When he is tired or resting, his eyelids will be droopy.
- Squinting denotes pain; it can also happen as a horse readies himself to attack or is setting in to be stubborn.

## Head and Neck

- An outstretched neck usually denotes curiosity.
- If on the defensive or on the alert, the horse lifts and arches his neck and head.
- Nodding of the head usually denotes impatience.

## Lips and

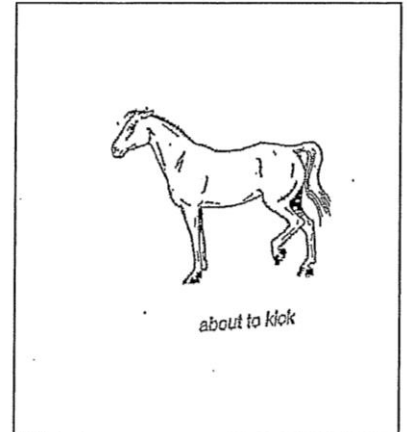


## Teeth

- When a horse is extremely relaxed the lower lip can be droopy.
- When stubborn, the lips are tightly drawn.
- An alert horse will have some tension in his lips.
- A horse with barred teeth means business and will likely attack and bite.

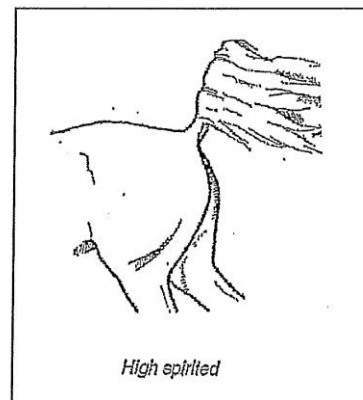
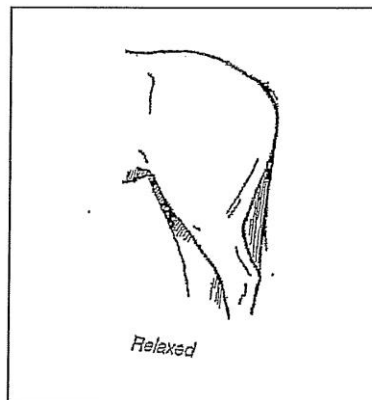
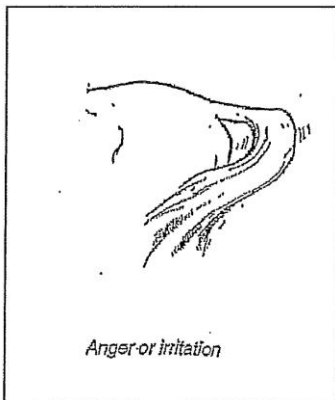
### Hooves and Legs

- As a threat, a warning to kick would be lifting the hoof off the ground and pinning the ears. ***However, merely lifting the hind hoof off the ground when the horse looks otherwise relaxed does not indicate a threat***; horses often rests a foot while standing on their other feet.
- When a horse paws at the ground, it is most often a sign of impatience.



### Tail

- When firmly clamped down, the horse is settling in to be stubborn or may be extremely annoyed.
- When swinging side to side in a relaxed way, the horse is calm and happy.
- When carried up and somewhat away from his body, the horse is alert and/or curious.
- When held straight up, the horse is usually high spirited and/or showing off.
- Tail swishing can mean either flies are bothersome or he may be slight annoyed at another horse or at a person nearby.
- When the tail lashes violently at his sides, he is usually very angry or in a state of extreme distress.

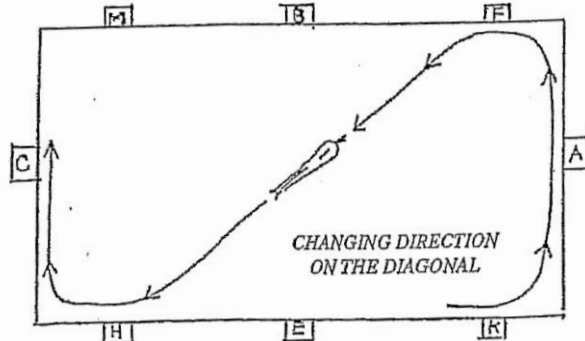


## Basic Arena Figures

### Changing the direction also known as changing the Rein

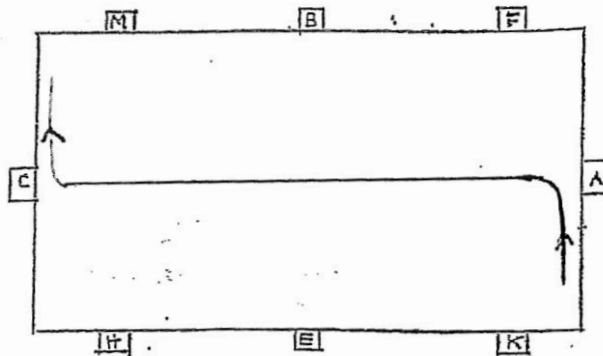
#### Changing the rein across the diagonal

Changing the rein across the diagonal and is changing the direction you are going by traveling in a diagonal line from one corner of the arena to opposite diagonal corner of the arena. Go right into the corners of the arena before and after the diagonal line to make the figure correct. This way of changing the direction you are going is useful because the whole class is able to remain in motion



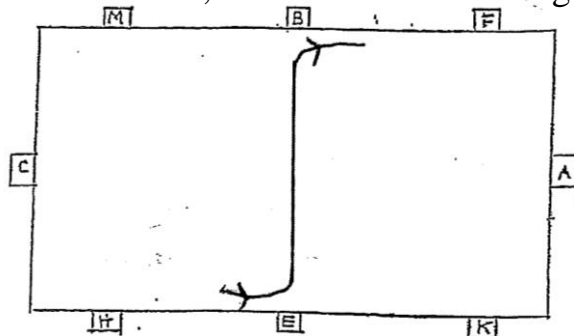
#### Change the rein down the centerline

Changing the rein down the center line is turning up the arena from letter C and riding a straight line towards letter A and changing the direction you were going or visa versa.



#### Changing the rein across the middle of the arena

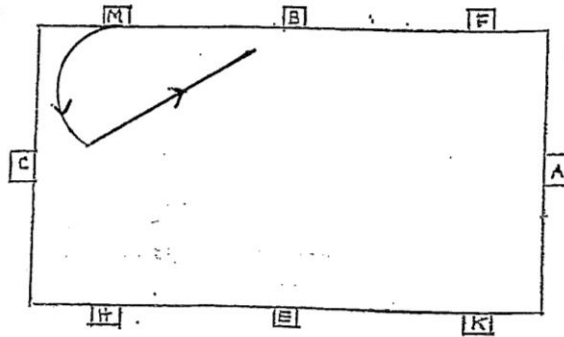
Changing the rein across the middle of the arena at B or E is turning left at letter B and then right at letter E or visa versa, this will result in changing the direction you were going.





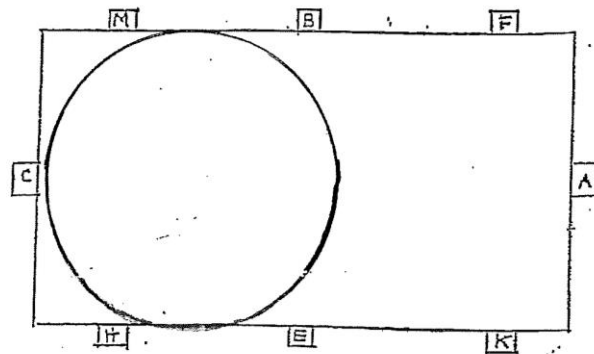
## Half circle and reverse

The half circle and reverse is done by leaving the rail in a half 10 meter circle and then heading back to the rail in a diagonal line. The shape of the figure is like a teardrop. The whole class can do a synchronized half circle and reverse at the same time to keep the class moving and changing the direction.



## Circles

Coming off the rail towards the center of the arena makes a circle in a circular shape and returning to the rail where you started. Circles can be any size from 10 meter to 20 meter in diameter.



## Figure 8

The figure 8 is made up of two round circles of that are of the same size joined in the middle by a straight line.

Just like circles figure 8's may also be made up of different sizes circles except that each circle on the figure 8 size must be of the same size.

